

COLLECTED POEMS

1929-1933

TRANSITIONAL POEM
FROM FEATHERS TO IRON
THE MAGNETIC MOUNTAIN

by C. Day Lewis



FOURTH IMPRESSION

THE HOGARTH PRESS

52 TAVISTOCK SQUARE,
LONDON, W C 1

1938

First published March 1935
Second impression May 1935
Third impression March 1936
Fourth impression March 1938

Printed in Great Britain by
Kimble & Bradford London W 1

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TRANSITIONAL POEM

This work is dedicated to

R E WARNER

PART I

Ira brevis, longa est pietas, recidiva voluptas,
Et cum posse perit, mens tamen una manet

MAXIMIAN

NOW I have come to reason
And cast my schoolboy clout,
Disorder I see is without,
And the mind must sweat a poison
Keener than Thessaly's brew,
A pus that, discharged not thence,
Gangrenes the vital sense
And makes disorder true
It is certain we shall attain
No life till we stamp on all
Life the tetragonal
Pure symmetry of brain

I felt, in my scorning
Of common poet's talk,
As arrogant as the hawk
When he mounts above the morning
"Behold man's droll appearance,
Faith wriggling upon his hooks,
Chin-deep in Eternal Flux
Angling for reassurance!"
I care not if he retorts—
"Of all that labour and wive
And worship, who would give
A fiddlestick for these thoughts
That sluggishly yaw and bend,
Fat strings of barges drawn
By a tug they have never seen
And never will comprehend?"

I sit in a wood and stare
Up at untroubled branches
Locked together and staunch as

Though girders of the air
And think, the first wind rising
Will crack that intricate crown
And let the daylight down
But there is naught surprising
Can explode the single mind —
Let figs from thistles fall
Or stars from their pedestal,
This architecture will stand

2

Come, soul, let us not fight
Like cynical Chinees
Beneath umbrella, nor wish to trade
Upon neutrality
For the mind must cope with
All elements or none—
Bask in dust along with weevils,
Or criticise the sun

Look, where cloud squadrons are
Stampeded by the wind,
A boy's kite sits as calm as Minos
If the string be sound
But if there are no hands
To keep the cable tense
And no eyes to mark a flaw in it,
What use the difference
Between a gust that twitters
Along the wainscot at dawn
And a burly wind playing the zany
In fields of barleycorn?

The time has gone when we
Could sprawl at ease between
Light and darkness, and deduce
Omnipotence from our Mean
For us the gregorian
Example of those eyes
That risked hell's blight and heaven's blinding
But dared not compromise

3

That afternoon we lay on Lillington Common
The land wallowed around us in the sunlight,
But finding all things my strenuous sense included
Ciphers new-copied by the indefinite sunlight,
I fell once more under the shadow of my Sphinx
The aimlessness of buttercup and beetle
So pestered me, I would have cried surrender
To the fossil certitudes of Tom, Dick, and Harry,
Had I known how or believed that such a surrender
Could fashion aught but a dead Sphinx from the live Sphinx

Later we lit a fire, and the hedge of darkness—
Garnished with not a nightingale nor a glow-worm—
Sprang up like the beanstalk by which our Jack aspired once
Then, though each star seemed little as a glow-worm
Perched on Leviathan's flank, and equally terrible
My tenure of this plateau that sloped on all sides
Into annihilation—yet was I lord of
Something for, seeing the fall of a burnt-out faggot
Make all the night sag down, I became lord of
Light's interplay—stoker of an old parable

4

Come up, Methuselah,
You doddering superman!
Give me an instant realized
And I'll outdo your span

In that one moment of evening
When roses are most red
I can fold back the firmament,
I can put time to bed

Abraham, stint your tally
Of concubines and cattle!
Give place to me—capitalist
In more intrinsic metal

I have a lover of flesh
And a lover that is a sprite
To-day I lie down with finite,
To-morrow with infinite

That one is a constant
And suffers no eclipse,
Though I feel sun and moon burning
Together on her lips

This one is a constant,
But she's not kind at all,
She raddles her gown with my despairs
And pants her lip with gall.

My lover of flesh is wild,
And willing to kiss again,
She is the potency of earth
When woods exhale the rain

My lover of air, like Artemis
Spectrally embraced,
Shuns the daylight that twists her smile
To mineral distaste

Twin poles energetic, they
Stand fast and generate
This spark that crackles in the void
As between fate and fate

5

My love is a tower
Standing up in her
I parley with planets
And the casual wind
Arcturus may grind
Against our wall —he whets
A tropic appetite,
And decorates our night
“What happier place
For Johnny Head-in-Air,
Who never would hear
Time mumbling at the base?”

I will not hear, for she's
My real Antipodes,
And our ingrowing loves

Shall meet below earth's spine
 And there shall intertwine,
 Though Babel falls above
 Time, we allow, destroys
 All aerial toys
 But to assail love's heart
 He has no strategy,
 Unless he suck up the sea
 And pull the earth apart

6

Dismayed by the monstrous credibility
 Of all antinomies, I climbed the fells
 To Easedale Tarn Could I be child again
 And grip those skirts of cloud the matriarch sky
 Draggled on mere and hillside? ("So the dog
 Returns to his vomit," you protest Well only
 The dog can tell what virtue lies in his vomit)

Sleep on, you fells and profound dales there's no
 Material wind or rain can insulate
 The mind against its own forked speculation,
 When once that storm sets in and then the flash
 That bleakly enlightens a few sour acres leaves but
 A more Egyptian darkness whence it came

Mountains are the musicians, they despise
 Their audience but the wind is a popular preacher
 And takes more from his audience than he gives them
 How can I wear the clouds, who feel each mountain
 Yearn from its flinty marrow to abdicate
 Sublimity and globe-trot with the wind?

By Easedale Tarn, where I sought a comforter,
 I found a gospel sterner than repentance

Prophetic earth, you need no lumber of logic
Who point your arguments alike with a primrose
And a sick sheep coughing among the stones
And I have only words, yet must they both
Outsoar the mountain and lap up the wind

7

Few things can more inflame
This far too combative heart
Than the intellectual Quixotes of the age
Prattling of abstract art.

No one would deny it—
But for a blind man's passion
Cassandra had been no more than a draggleskirt,
Helen a ten-year fashion
Yet had there not been one hostess
Ever whose arms waylaid
Like the tough bramble a princeling's journey, or
At the least no peasant maid
Redressing with rude heat
Nature's primeval wrong,
Epic had slumbered on beneath his blindness
And Helen lacked her song

(So the antique balloon
Wobbles with no defence
Against the void but a grapnel that hops and ploughs
Through the landscape of sense)

Phrase-making, dress-making—
Distinction's hard to find,

For thought must play the mannequin, strut in phrase,
Or gape with the ruck and mind,
Like body, from covering gets
Most adequate display
Yet time trundles this one to the rag-and-bone man,
While that other may
Reverberate all along
Man's craggy circumstance—
Naked enough to keep its dignity
Though it eye God askance

PART II

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then, I contradict myself,
I am large, I contain multitudes

W. WHITMAN

IT IS becoming now to declare my allegiance,
To dig some reservoir for my springtime's pain,
Bewilderment and pride, before their insurgence
Is all sopped up in this dry regimen.

Laughable dwarfs, you may twirl and tweak my heart,—
Have I not fought with Anakim at the crossways?
Once I was Cicero, though pedant fate
Now bids me learn the grammar of my days

These, then, have my allegiance, they whose shining
Convicted my false dawn of flagrant night,
Yet ushered up the sun, as poets leaning
Upon a straw surmise the infinite

You, first, who ground my lust to love upon
Your gritty humorous virginity,
Then yielding to its temper suddenly
Proved what a Danube can be struck from stone.
With you I ran the gauntlet for my prime,
Then living in the moment lived for all time.

Next the hawk-faced man, who could praise an apple
In terms of peach and win the argument. Quick
Was he to trip the shambling rhetoric
Of laws and lions yet abstract turned the tables
And his mind, almost, with a whiff of air
Clothed first in a woman and after in a nightmare

She next, sorrow's familiar, who turned
Her darkness to our light, that "brazen leech"
Alleviating the vain cosmic itch

With fact coated in formul lest it burned
Our tongue She shall have portion in my praise,
And live in me, not memory, for always.

Last the tow-haired poet, never done
With cutting and planing some new gnomic prop
To jack his all too stable universe up —
Conduct's Old Dobbin, thought's chameleon
Single mind copes with split intelligence,
Breeding a piebald strain of truth and nonsense

These have I loved and chosen, once being sure
Some spacious vision waved upon their eyes
That troubles not the common register,
And love them still, knowing it otherwise

Knowing they held no mastership in wisdom
Or wit save by certificate of my love,
I have found out a better way to praise them—
Nestor shall die and let Patroclus live

So I declare it These are they who built
My house and never a stone of it laid agley.
So cheat I memory that works in guilt
And stucco to restore a fallen day

9

I thought to have had some fame
As the village idiot
Condemned at birth to sit
Oracle of blind alleys
Shanghaied aboard the galleys
I got reprieve and shame

Tugging at his oar
This idiot who, for lack
Of the striped Zodiac,
Swore that every planet
Was truck, soon found some merit
In his own abject star

Then there came disgust
Of the former loon who could
Elbow a bridge and brood
From Chaos to last Trump
Over the imbecile pomp
Of waters dribbling past

For what can water be
But so much less or more
Gravamen to the oar?—
(Reasons our reformed dunce)
It is high time to renounce
This village idiocy

I O

How they would jeer at us—
Ulysses, Herodotus,
The hard-headed Phoenicians
Or, of later nations,
Columbus, the Pilgrim Fathers
And a thousand others
Who laboured only to find
Some pittance of new ground,
Merchandise or women

Those rude and bourgeois seamen
Got glory thrown in
As it were with every ton
Of wave that swept their boat,
And would have preferred a coat
For keeping off the spray

Since the heroes lie
Entombed with the recipe
Of epic in their heart,
And have buried—it seems—that art
Of minding one's own business
Magnanimously, for us
There's nothing but to recant
Ambition, and be content
Like the poor child at play
To find a holiday
In the sticks and mud
Of a familiar road

I I

If I bricked up ambition and gave no air
To the ancestral curse that gabbles there,
I could leave wonder on the latch
And with a whole heart watch
The calm declension of an English year

I would be pædagog—hear poplar, lime
And oak recite the seasons' paradigm
Each year a dynasty would fall
Within my orchard wall—
I'd be their Tacitus, and they my time

Among those pippin princes I could ease
A heart long sick for some Hesperides
Plainsong of thrushes in the soul
Would drown that rigmarole
Of Eldorados, Auks, and Perilous Seas

(The God they cannot see sages define
In a slow-motion If I discipline
My flux into a background still
And sure as a waterfall
Will not a rainbow come of that routine?)

So circumscribe the vampire and he'll die soon—
Lunacy and anæmia take their own
Grounded in temperate soil I'll stay,
An orchard god, and say
My glow-worms hold a candle to the moon

I 2

Enough There is no magic
Circle nor prophylactic
Sorcery of garlic
Will keep the vampire in
See!—that authentic
Original of sin
Slides from his cabin
Up to my sober trees
And spits disease
Thus infected, they
Start a sylvan rivalry,

Poplar and oak surpass
Their natural green, and race
Each other to the stars

Since my material
Has chosen to rebel,
It were most politic—
Ere I also fall sick—
To escape this Eden
Indeed there has been no peace
For any garden
Or for any trees
Since Priapus died,
And lust can no more ride
Over self-love and pride

Leave Eden to the brutes
For he who lets his sap
Run downward to the roots
Will wither at the top
And wear fool's-cap.
I am no English lawn
To build a smooth tradition
Out of Time's recession
And centuries of dew . .
Adam must subdue
The indestructible serpent,
Outstaring it content
If he can transplant
One slip from paradise
Into his own eyes

I 3

Can the mole take
A census of the stars?
Our firmament will never
Give him headache

The man who nuzzles
In a woman's lap
Burrows toward a night
Too deep for puzzles

While he, whose prayer
Holds up the starry system
In a God's train, sees nothing
Difficult there

So I, perhaps,
Am neither mole nor mantis,
I see the constellations,
But by their gaps

I 4

In heaven, I suppose, lie down together
Agonised Pilate and the boa-constrictor
That swallows anything but we must seize
One horn or the other of our antitheses
When I consider each independent star
Wearing its world of darkness like a fur
And rubbing shoulders with infinity,
I am content experience should be
More discontinuous than the points pricked
Out by the mazy course of a derelict,

Iceberg, or Flying Dutchman, and the heart
Stationary and passive as a chart
In such star-frenzy I could boast, betwixt
My yester and my morrow self are fixed
All the birds carolling and all the seas
Groaning from Greenwich to the Antipodes.

But an eccentric hour may come, when systems
Not stars divide the dark, and then life's pistons
Pounding into their secret cylinder
Begin to tickle the most anchorite ear
With hints of mechanisms that include
The man And once that rhythm arrests the blood,
Who would be satisfied his mind is no
Continent but an archipelago?
They are preposterous paladins and prance
From myth to myth, who take an Agag stance
Upon the needle points of here and now,
Where only angels ought to tread Allow
One jointure feasible to man, one state
Squared with another—then he can integrate
A million selves and where disorder ruled
Straddle a chaos and beget a world.

Peals of the New Year once for me came tumbling
Out of the narrow night like clusters of humming-
Birds loosed from a black bag, and rose again
Irresponsibly to silence but now I strain
To follow them and see for miles around
Men square or shrug their shoulders at the sound.
Then I remember the pure and granite hills
Where first I caught an ideal tone that stills,

Like the beloved's breath asleep, all din
Of earth at traffic silence's first-born,
Carrying over each sensual ravine
To inform the seer and uniform the seen
So from this ark, this closet of the brain,
The dove emerges and flies back again
With a Messiah sprig of certitude—
Promise of ground below the sprawling flood

I 5

Desire is a witch
And runs against the clock
It can unstitch
The decent hem
Where space tacks on to time
It can unlock
Pandora's privacies

It puffs in these
Top-gallants of the mind,
And away I stand
On the elemental gale
Into an ocean
That the liar Lucian
Had never dared retail

When my love leans with all
Her shining breast and shoulder,
I know she is older
Than Ararat the hill,
And yet more young
Than the first daffodil
That ever shews a spring

When her eyes delay
On me, so deep are they
Tunnelled by love, although
You poured Atlantic
In this one and Pacific
In the other, I know
They would not overflow

Desire clicks back
Like cuckoo into clock,
Leaves me to explain
Eyes that a tear will drown
And a body where youth
Nor age will long remain
To implicate the truth

It seems that we must call
Anything truth whose well
Is deep enough,
For the essential
Philosopher-stone, desire,
Needs no other proof
Than its own fire

16

Remembering how between
Embrace and ultimate bone
Always have interposed
Strata undiagnosed
In Love's geology,
And even memory
Is bullied by the flesh
Out of its usual dish,

I railed upon desire,
The silly self-betrayer
Whose Cronic appetite
Gobbles up all his brood,
And I found, in body's despite,
A moral to clinch the mood

They say that a mathematician
Once fell to such a passion
For x and y , he locked
His door to keep outside
Whatever might distract
Him from his heavenly bride
And presently died
In the keenest of blisses
With a dozen untasted dishes
Outside his door.

O man,
Feed Cronos with a stone.
He's easily decoyed
Who, perched on any throne,
Happily gnaws the void

From this theoric tower
Corn-land and city seem
A lovely skiagram
You could not guess what sour
Contagion has outworn
Those streets of men and corn
Let body doubt the pure
Shadow will re sure,

For shadow gives a free
Licence to lunacy —
And yet fools say it is
The heart that's credulous
For once, O sceptic heart,
Will you not play your part?

I 7

When nature plays hedge-schoolmaster,
Shakes out the gaudy map of summer
And shows me charabanc, rose, barley-ear
And every bright-winged hummer,

He only would require of me
To be the sponge of natural laws
And learn no more of that cosmography
Than passes through the pores

Why must I then unleash my brain
To sweat after some revelation
Behind the rose, heedless if truth maintain
On the rose-bloom her station?

When bullying April bruised mine eyes
With sleet-bound appetites and crude
Experiments of green, I still w wise
And kissed the blossoming rod

Now summer brings what April took,
Riding with fanfares from the south,
And I should be no Solomon to look
My Sheba in the mouth.

Charabancs shout along the lane
And summer gales bay in the wood
No less superbly because I can't explain
What I have understood

Let logic analyse the hive,
Wisdom's content to have the honey
So I'll go bite the crust of things and thrive
While hedgerows still are sunny

PART III

But even so, amid the tornadoed Atlantic of
my being, do I myself still centrally disport
in mute calm

HERMAN MELVILLE

ON MY right are trees and a lank stream sliding
Impervious as Anaconda to the suns
Of autumn, and the boughs are vipers writhing
To slough the summer from their brittle bones
Here is the Trojan meadow, here Scamander,
And I, the counterfeit Achilles, feel
A river-god surge up to tear me asunder,
A serpent melancholy bruise my heel

On my left is the city famed for talk
And tolerance Its old men run about
Chasing reality, chasing the Auk
With butterfly-nets Its young men swell the rout
Gaping at Helen in the restaurant,
Mocking at Helen from monastic towers
Boy Achilles, who has known Helen too long
To scold or worship, stands outside and glowers

Between the stream and city a rubbish heap
Proclaims the pleasant norm with smouldering stench
See! the pathetic pyre where Trojans keep
Well out of sight the prey of time's revenges,
Old butterfly-nets, couches where lovers lay—
All furniture out of fashion So the fire
Guts the proud champions of the real so Troy
Cremates her dead selves and ascends to higher

Grecians awake, salute the happy norm!
Now may Achilles find employment still,
And once again the blood-lust will grow warm,
Gloating on champions he could never kill

And if Scamander rears up and pursues,
This ring of rubbish fire will baffle all
His rage Hero, you're safe, in the purlieus
Of God's infernal acre king and thrall

19

When April comes alive
Out of the small bird's throat,
Achilles in the sunshine
Kept on his overcoat
Trojan and Greek at battle,
Helen wantoning—
None but heroic metal
Could ignore the spring

When honeysuckle and summer
Suffocate the lane,
That sulky boil was broken
And I at last a man
I'd have stripped off my skin to
The impacts of hate and love—
Rebel alone because I
Could not be slave enough

Bodies now, not shadows,
Intercept the sun
It takes no rod to tell me
That discipline's begun
Seeking the fabled fusion
From love's last chemical,
I found the experiment
Makes monads of us all,

For love still keeps apart,
And all its vanities
But emphasise higher heaven,
As February trees
When rooks begin their noisy
Coronation of the wood
Are turreted with folly
Yet grow toward some good

I thought, since love can harness
Pole with contrary pole,
It must be earthed in darkness
Deeper than mine or mole
Now that I have loved
A while and not gone blind,
I think love's terminals
Are fixed in fire and wind

20

How often, watching the windy boughs
Juggle with the moon, or leaning
My body against a wind
That sets all earth careening,
Or when I have seen flames browsing
On the prairie of night and tossing
Their muzzles up at Orion,
Or the sun's hot arsenal spent
On a cloud salient
Till the air explodes with light,
How often have I perceived a delight
Which parallels the racing mind.
But never rides it off the course

Another fire, another wind
Now take the air, and I
Am matched with a stricter ecstasy
For he whom love and fear enlist
To comb his universe
For what Protagoras missed,
Needs be reborn hermaphrodite
And put himself out to nurse
With a syren and a sibyl.
So the spider gradually,
Drawing fine systems from his belly,
Includes creation with a thread
And squats on the navel of his world
Yet even that arch-fakir must feed
Austerity on warm blood

The tracks of love and fear
Lead back till I disappear
Into that ample terminus
From which all trains draw out
Snorting towards an Ultima Thule
Nothing is altered about
The place, except its gloom is newly
Lacquered by an unaccustomed eye,
Yet cannot blunt mine eyes now
To the clear finality
Of all beginnings

Outside
In the diamond air of day
The engines simmer with delay,
Desiring a steely discipline

No less, though now quite satisfied
They travel a loop-line

2 I

My lover is so happy, you well might say
One of the Hellene summers had lost its way
And taken shelter underneath her breast
None but its proper fear can now arrest
Our meteoric love but still we grieve
That curves of mind and body should outlive
All expectation, and the heart become
A blunt habitual arc, a pendulum
Wagged by the ghost of its first impetus
Love keeps the bogey slave to admonish us
Of vanity, yet through this fear we scrawl
Our sky with love's vain comets ere it fall

And then, up on High Stoy standing alone,
We saw the excellence of the serious down
That shakes the seasons from its back, and bears
No obligation but to wind and stars
What paroxysm of green can crack those huge
Ribs grown from Chaos, stamped by the Deluge?

Later, within the wood sweetly reclining
On bluebell and primrose, we loved, whose shining
Made a poor fiction of the royal skies,
But were to love alone repositories
Of what by-product wonder it could spare
From lips and eyes Yet nothing had such power
As prattle of small flowers within the brake
To mount the panic heart and rein it back

From the world's edge For they, whose virtue lies
In a brief act of beauty, summarize
Earth's annual passion and leave the naked earth
Still dearer by their death than by their birth.
So we, who are love's hemispheres hiding
Beneath the coloured ordeal of our spring,
Shall be disclosed, and I shall see your face
An autumn evening certain of its peace

22

It is an easier thing
To give up great possessions
Than to forego one farthing
Of the rare unpossessed

But I've been satellite
Long enough to this moon,
The pharisee of night
Shining by tradition.

There's no star in the sky
But gazing makes it double
And the infatuate eye
Can breed dilemmas on it

Wiser it were to sheath
My burning heart in clay
Than by this double breath
To magnify the tomb.

I'd live like grass and trees,
Familiar of the earth,

Proving its basalt peace
Till I was unperturbed

By synod of the suns
Or a moon's insolence
As the ant when he runs
Beneath sky-scraping grass

23

You've trafficked with no beast but unicorn
Who dare hold me in scorn
For my dilemmas Nor have you perceived
The compass-point suggest
An east by pointing to the west,
Or you'd not call me thus deceived
For fixing my desire
On this magnetic north to gyre
Under the sheer authority of ice

I have seen what impertinence
Stokes up the dingy rhetoric of sense
I've seen your subaltern ambitions rise
Yellow and parallel
As smoke from garden cities that soon fades
In air it cannot even defile Poor shades,
Not black enough for hell,
Learn of this poplar which beyond its height
Aspires not, and will bend beneath the thumb
Of every wind, yet when the stars come
It is an omen darker than the night

The rest may go No satisfaction lies
In such And you alone shall hear
My pride, whose love's the accurate frontier
Of all my enterprise
While your beauties' succession
Holds my adventure in a flowery chain
As the spring hedgerows hold the lane,
How can I care whether it ends upon
Marsh or metropolis?

But look within my heart, see there
The tough stoic ghost of a pride was too severe
To risk an armistice
With lesser powers than death, but rather died
Welcoming that iron in the soul
Which keeps the spirit whole,
Since none but ghosts are satisfied
To see a glory passing and let it pass

For I had been a modern moth and hurled
Myself on many a flaming world,
To find its globe was glass
In you alone
I met the naked light, by you became
Veteran of a flame
That burns away all but the warrior bone
And I shall know, if time should falsify
This star the company of my night,
Mine is the heron's flight
Which makes a solitude of any sky

Let cactus spring where hermits go to bed
With those they come to kill
Three-legged I ran with that importunate curse,
Till I guessed (in the sexual trance
Or playing darts with drunken schoolmasters)
The integrity that's laid bare
Upon the edge of common furniture
Now to the town returning
I accept the blind collisions that ensure
Soul's ektogenesis.

25

Where is the true, the central stone
That clay and vapour zone,
That earthquakes budge nor vinegar bites away,
That rivets man against Doomsday?

You will not find it there, although
You sink a shaft below
Despair and see the roots of death close-curved
About the kernel of your world.

Where is the invaluable star
Whose beams enlacèd are
The scaffolding of truth, whose stages drawn
Aside unshutter an ideal dawn?

It is well hid. You would not find
It there, though far you mined
Up through the golden seams that cram the night
And walked those galleries of light

Above, below, the Flux tight-packed
Stages its sexual act—
An ignominious scuffling in the dark
Where brute encounters brute baresark.

Keep to the pithead, then, nor pry
Beyond what meets the eye,
Since household stuff, stone walls, mountains and trees
Placard the day with certainties

For individual truth must lie
Within diversity,
Under the skin all creatures are one race,
Proved integers but by their face.

So he, who learns to comprehend
The form of things, will find
They in his eye that purest star have sown
And changed his mind to singular stone.

26

Chiefly to mind appears
That hour on Silverhowe
When evening's lid hung low
And the sky was about our ears.
Buoyed between fear and love
We watched in eastward form
The armadas of the storm
And sail superbly above,
So near, they'd split and founder
On the least jag of sense,

One false spark fire the immense
Broadside the confounding thunder
They pass, give not a salvo,
And in their rainy wash
We hear the horizons crash
With monitors of woe

Only at highest power
Can love and fear become
Their equilibrium,
And in that eminent hour
A virtue is made plain
Of passionate cleavage
Like the hills' cutting edge
When the sun sets to rain
This is the single mind,
This the star-solved equation
Of life with life's negation
A deathless cell designed
To demonstrate death's act,
Which, the more surely it moves
To earth's influence, but proves
Itself the more intact

27

With me, my lover makes
The clock assert its chime
But when she goes, she takes
The mainspring out of time.

Yet this time-wrecking charm
Were better than love dead

And its hollow alarum
Hammered out on lead.

Why should I fear that Time
Will superannuate
These workmen of my rhyme—
Love, despair and hate?

Fleeing the herd, I came
To a graveyard on a hill,
And felt its mould proclaim
The bone gregarious still

Boredoms and agonies
Work out the rhythm of bone —
No peace till creature his
Creator has outgrown

Passion dies from the heart
But to infect the marrow,
Holds dream and act apart
Till the man discard his narrow

Sapience and folly
Here, where the graves slumber
In a green melancholy
Of overblown summer

PART IV

The hatches are let down
And the night meets the day
The spirit comes to its own
The beast to its play

W H. AUDEN

28

In the beginning was the Word

UNDER different skies now, I recall
The childhood of the Word

Before the Fall,

Was dancing on the green with sun and moon

And the Word was with God

Years pass, relaxed in a faun's afternoon

And the Word was God

For him rise up the litanies of leaves

From the tormented wood, and semi-breves

Of birds accompany the simple dawn

Obsequious to his mood the valleys yawn,

Nymphs scamper or succumb, waterfalls part

The hill-face with vivacious smiles The heart,

Propped up against its paradise, records

Each wave of godhead in a sea of words

He grows a wall of sunflower and moonflower blent

To protest his solitude and to prevent

Wolf or worm from trespassing on his rule

Observe how paradise can make a fool

They can't get in, but he—for a god no doubt

Is bound by his own laws—cannot get out

And the Word was made flesh,

Under different skies now,

Wrenching a stony song from a scant acre,

The Word still justifies its Maker

Green fields were my slippers,

Sky was my hat,

But curiosity

Killed the cat

For this did I burst
My daisy band—
To be clapped in irons
By a strange hand?
Nevertheless, you are well out of Eden
For there's no wonder where all things are new,
No dream where all is sleep, no vision where
Seer and seen are one, nor prophecy
Where only echo waits upon the tongue
Now he has come to a country of stone walls,
Breathes a precarious air
Frontiers of adamant declare
A cold autonomy. There echo starves,
And the mountain ash bleeds stoically there
Above the muscular stream.
What cairn will show the way he went?
A harrow rusting on defeated bones?
Or will he leave a luckier testament—
Rock deeply rent,
Fountains of spring playing upon the air?

29

Those Himalayas of the mind
Are not so easily possessed
There's more than precipice and storm
Between you and your Everest

You who declare the peak of peaks
Alone will satisfy your want,
Can you distil a grain of snow?
Can you digest an adamant?

Better by far the household cock
Scratching the common yard for corn,
Whose rainy voice all night at will
Can signify a private dawn

Another bird, sagacious too,
Circles in plain bewilderment
Where shoulder to shoulder long waves march
Towards a magnetic continent

“What are these rocks impede our pomp?”
Gesticulating to the sun
The waves part ranks, sidle and fume,
Then close behind them and march on.

The waves advance, the Absolute Cliffs
Unaccountably repel
They linger grovelling, where assault
Has failed, attrition may tell

The bird sees nothing to the point,
Shrugs an indifferent wing, proceeds
From rock to rock in the mid-ocean
Peering for barnacles and weeds

30

In the chaotic age
This was enough for me—
Her beauty walked the page
And it was poetry.

Now that the crust has cooled,
The floods are kept in pen,
Mountains have got their mould
And air its regimen.

Nothing of heat remains
But where the sacred hill
Conserves within her veins
The fiery principle.

Fire can no longer shake
Stars from their sockets down,
It burns now but to make
Vain motions above the town

This glum canal has lain
Opaque night after night,
One hour will entertain
A jubilee of light,

And show that beauty is
A motion of the mind
By its own dark caprice
Directed or confined

31

Where is the fool would want those days again
Whose light was globed in pain
And danced upon a point of wire?
When the charged batteries of desire
Had licence but to pass
Into a narrow room of frosted glass?

The globe was broken and the light made free
Of a king's territory
Artemis then, that huntress pale,
Flung her black dogs upon the trail
So with one glance around
The hunted lightning ran and went to ground

Safer perhaps within that cell to stay
Which qualified its ray
And gave it place and period,
Than be at liberty where God
Has put no firmament
Of glass to prove dark and light different

But Artemis leaps down At her thin back
Wheel the shades in a pack
At once that old habit of fire
Jumps out, not stopping to inquire
Whether it follows or flies,
Content to use the night for exercise

And I, when at the sporting queen's halloo
The light obedient flew
Blazing its trail across the wild—
Resigned now but not reconciled,
That ancient Sphinx I saw
Put moon and shades like mice beneath its paw.

32

The red nor'-easter is out
Trees in the covert strain
Like dogs upon a leash
And snuff the hurricane

Another wind and tree now
Are constant to their west
The breath that scours the midday
Unseen, is manifest
In this embittered thorn—
Forcing the stubborn frame
To grow one way and point
His constancy and aim

This wind that fills the hollow
Sky, of a vacuum
Was purely bred The thorn once
In modest seed lay mum
That squats above the Atlantic
Promontoried on pride.
For my tenacious tree
Requires not, to decide
That he has roots somewhere,
A tropic foliage,
Since that the leaf recurs
Is a sufficient gauge

Again, what of this glass
Whereby the formulæ
Of sense should all be solved?
It cannot enlarge a flea
Nor accurately define
The features of a star
Gazing through it I saw
Nothing particular
Distant or close A summer
Accident it was
Explained its property

It is a burning-glass
Which interrupts the sun
To make him more intense,
And touch to a single flame
The various heap of sense

33

Seventeen months ago
We came to the mine on the moor A crow
Sees more than meets the eye—
What marrow in fleshless bones may lie
And now I passed by a forbidding coast
Where ironworks rust
On each headland goats crop the salted grass
Steam oozes out of the mud Earth has
No promise for proprietors I from far
Came, and passing saw something oracular.
Put down the tripod here.

I stretched a line from pole to pole
To hang my paper lanterns on Poor soul,
By such a metaphysical conceit
Thinking to make ends meet!
This line, spun from the blind heart—
What could it do but prove the poles apart?
More expert now, I twist the dials, catch
Electric hints, curt omens such
As may be heard by one tapping the air
That belts an ambiguous sphere
Put down the tripod here

This is the interregnum of my year,
All spring except the leaf is here,

All winter but the cold
Bandage of snow for the first time unrolled
Lays bare the wounds given when any fate
And most men's company could humiliate
Sterilized now, yet still they prick
And pulse beneath the skin, moving me like
An engine driven on
By sparks of its own combustion
There are going to be some changes made to-day

Then add to this that I
Have known, and shall again, the greedy thigh,
Browned by that sun, but not betrayed,
Which puts the Dog-Star in the shade
For though my world at one Equator meet,
These Arctic zones are still complete
Baring my skin to every bruise
Love gives, I'll love the more, since they're but dues
That flesh must pay to bone
Till each is overthrown
There are going to be some changes made to-day

34

The hawk comes down from the air
Sharpening his eye upon
A wheeling horizon
Turned scrutiny to prayer

He guessed the prey that cowers
Below, and learnt to keep
The distance which can strip
Earth to its blank contours.

Then trod the air, content
With contemplation till
The truth of valley and hill
Should be self-evident

Or as the little lark
Who veins the sky with song,
Asking from dawn to dark
No revenues of spring

But with the night descends
Into his chosen tree,
And the famed singer ends
In anonymity

So from a summer's height
I come into my peace,
The wings have earned their night,
And the song may cease

NOTES TO TRANSITIONAL POEM

THE central theme of this poem is the single mind. The poem is divided into four parts, which essentially represent four phases of personal experience in the pursuit of single-mindedness. It will be seen that a transition is intended from one part to the next such as implies a certain spiritual progress and a consequent shifting of aspect. As far as any definitions can be attached to these aspects, they may be termed (1) metaphysical, (2) ethical, (3) psychological, while (4) is an attempt to relate the poetic impulse with the experience as a whole. Formally, the parts fall with fair accuracy into the divisions of a theorem in geometry, *i.e.* general enunciation, particular enunciation, proof, corollaries. The following notes may be of assistance to the diligent, they are intended simply for the elucidation of the text, and do not necessarily imply assent to any proposition that may be advanced in them

C D L

January, 1929

PAGE 9, lines 3-8, *cf* Spinoza, *Letters* "I would warn you that I do not attribute to nature either beauty or deformity, order or confusion. Only in relation to our imagination can things be called beautiful or ugly, well-ordered or confused."

PAGE 9, line 4, *cf* Spinoza, *De intell. emend.* "But above all a method must be thought out of healing the understanding and purifying it at the beginning."

PAGE 14, line 22, *cf* Exodus x, 21 and 27.

PAGE 18, line 6, *cf* Deuteronomy ix, 2, also 1, 28

PAGE 23, line 6 *sqq.*, *cf* page 47, line 5

PAGE 28, line 3, Cronos is here used as a symbol for desire

PAGE 28, line 21 *sqq*, contrast Donne

"But up into the watch-tower get,
And see all things despoiled of fallacies "

PAGE 28, line 23, "skiagram"—a drawing in shadow, not strictly the Greek sense

PAGE 38, line 21, *cf* Dante, *Inferno*

"Ed egli a me Questo misero modo
Tengon l'anime triste di coloro,
Che visser senza infamia e senza lodo "

PAGE 40, line 23, *cf* Isaiah xxxv, 1

PAGE 42, line 9-16, *cf* Wyndham Lewis, *Art of Being Ruled*, Part 12, Chapter VII

PAGE 42, line 21, "Fear and love" throughout this poem represent the general principles of attraction and repulsion

PAGE 46, line 1, "the Word" in this poem stands for the individual poetic impulse, as a part of the Logos in the theologian's sense of "mind expressing God in the world "

PAGE 46, line 4, *cf* "The Ballad of the Twa Brothers"

"O when will you come hame again?
Dear Willie, tell to me!
"When the sun and moon dance on yon green,
And that will never be ' "

PAGE 49, line 12, *cf* Henry James, *The Ambassadors*
"Whether or no he had a grand idea of the lucid, he held that nothing ever was in fact—for anyone else—explained One went through the vain motions, but it was mostly a waste of life "

PAGE 49, lines 17-20, *cf* note on page 9, lines 3-8

PAGE 50, line 23, *cf* page 11, line 13

PAGE 53, line 9, the refrain of a song sung by Miss Sophie Tucker

PAGE 53, line 21, *cf.* page 9, line 15

PAGE 54, lines 1-4, *cf* Spinoza, *De intell emend* "Finally, perception is that wherein a thing is perceived through its essence alone A thing is said to be perceived through its essence alone when from the fact that I know something, I know what it is to know anything "

FROM FEATHERS TO IRON

TO THE MOTHER

Do thoughts grow like feathers, the dead
end of life?

W H. AUDEN

We take but three steps from feathers to
iron.

JOHN KEATS

I

SUPPOSE that we, to-morrow or the next day,
 Came to an end—in storm the shafting broken,
 Or a mistaken signal, the flange lifting—
 Would that be premature, a text for sorrow?

Say what endurance gives or death denies us
 Love's proved in its creation, not eternity
 Like leaf or linnet the true heart's affection
 Is born, dies later, asks no reassurance

Over dark wood rises one dawn felicitous,
 Bright through awakened shadows fall her crystal
 Cadenzas, and once for all the wood is quickened
 So our joys visit us, and it suffices

Nor fear we now to live who in the valley
 Of the shadow of life have found a causeway,
 For love restores the nerve and love is under
 Our feet resilient. Shall we be weary?

Some say we walk out of Time altogether
 This way into a region where the primrose
 Shows an immortal dew, sun at meridian
 Stands up for ever and in scent the lime tree

This is a land which later we may tell of
 Here-now we know, what death cannot diminish
 Needs no replenishing, yet certain are, though
 Dying were well enough, to live is better

Passion has grown full man by his first birthday.
 Running across the bean-fields in a south wind,

Fording the river mouth to feel the tide-race—
Child's play that was, though proof of our possessions

Now our research is done, measured the shadow,
The plains mapped out, the hills a natural bound'ry.
Such and such is our country There remains to
Plough up the meadowland, reclaim the marshes

II

Let's leave this town Mutters of loom
Nor winding gear disturb
The flat and residential air—
A city all suburb.

Go not this road, for arc-lamps cramp
The dawn, sense fears to take
A mortal step, and body obeys
An automatic brake

Ah, leave the wall-eyed town, and come
Where heaven keeps open house,
Watch not the markets but the stars,
Get shares of gilt-edged space

For what we have in hand is no
Business of shop and street
This is our strait, our Little Minch
Where wind and tide meet

You are the tides running for ever
Along their ancient groove
Such winds am I, pause not for breath
And to fresh shores will move

III

Back to the countryside
That will not lose its pride
When the green flags of summer all are taken,
Having no mind to force
The seasons from their course
And no remorse for a front line forsaken

Look how the athletic field
His flowery vest has peeled
To wrestle another fall with rain and sleet
The rock will not relent
Nor desperate earth consent
Till the spent winter blows his long retreat

Come, autumn, use the spur!
Let us not still defer
To drive slow furrows in the impatient soil
Persuade us now these last
Silk summer shreds to cast
And fasten on the harsh habit of toil

The swallows are all gone
Into the rising sun.
You leave to-night for the Americas
Under the dropping days
Alone the labourer stays
And says that winter will be slow to pass

IV

Come on, the wind is whirling our summer away,
And air grows dizzy with leaves
It is time to lay up for a winter day,
Conserve earth's infant energy, water's play,
Bind the sun down in sheaves

Contact of sun and earth loads granary,
Stream's frolic will grind flour,
Tree's none the worse for fruit Shall we
Insulate our strong currents of ecstasy
Or breed units of power?

Bodies we have, fabric and frame designed
To take the stress of love,
Buoyant on gust, multi-engined
Experiment's over. We must up and find
What trade-routes are above

This is no pleasure trip We carry freight
To a certain end, not whirled
Past earth's pull, nosing at no star's gate
We'll have fresh air, will serve, perhaps, the state,
Surely, enlarge our world

Or, think Tightens the darkness, the rails thrum,
For night express is due.
Glory of steam and steel strikes dumb,
Sense sucked away swirls in the vacuum
So passion passes through

Here is love's junction, no terminus
He arrives at girl or boy.
Signal a clear line and let us
Give him the run of life we shall get thus
A record of our joy

V

Beauty's end is in sight,
Terminus where all feather joys alight
Wings that flew lightly
Fold and are iron We see
The thin end of mortality

We must a little part,
And sprouting seed crack our cemented heart
Who would get an heir
Initial loss must bear
A part of each will be elsewhere

What life may now decide
Is past the clutch of caution, the range of pride
Speaking from the snow
The crocus lets me know
That there is life to come, and go

VI

Now she is like the white tree-rose
That takes a blessing from the sun
Summer has filled her veins with light,
And her warm heart is washed with noon

Or as a poplar, ceaselessly
Gives a soft answer to the wind
Cool on the light her leaves lie sleeping,
Folding a column of sweet sound

Powder the stars Forbid the night
To wear those brilliants for a brooch
So soon, dark death, you may close down
The mines that made this beauty rich

Her thoughts are pleiads, stooping low
O'er glades where nightingale has flown
And like the luminous night around her
She has at heart a certain dawn

VII

Rest from loving and be living.
Fallen is fallen past retrieving
The unique flyer dawn's dove
Arrowing down feathered with fire.

Cease denying, begin knowing
Comes peace this way here comes renewing
With dower of bird and bud knocks
Loud on winter wall on death's door

Here's no meaning but of morning
Naught soon of night but stars remaining,
Sink lower, fade, as dark womb
Recedes creation will step clear

VIII

- 3 We whom a full tornado cast up high,
Two years marooned on self-sufficiency,
Kissing on an island out of the trade-routes
Nor glancing at horizon,—we'll not dare
Outstay the welcome of our tropic sun
- 1E Here is the dark Interior, noon yet high,
Light to work by and a sufficiency
Of timber Build then We may reach the trade-
routes
We'll take the winds at their word, yes, will dare
Wave's curling lip, the hot looks of the sun
- HE Hull is finished Now must the foraging eye
Take in provisions for a long journey
Put by our summertime, the fruits, the sweet roots,
The virgin spring moss-shadowed near the shore,
And over idle sands the halcyon
- SHE No mark out there, no mainland meets the eye
Horizon gapes, and yet must we journey
Beyond the bays of peace, pull up our sweet roots,
Cut the last cord links us to native shore,
Toil on waters too troubled for the halcyon
- BOTH Though we strike a new continent, it shall be
Our islet, a new world, our colony
If we miss land, no matter We've a stout boat
Provisioned for some years we need endure
No further ill than to be still alone

IX

Waning is now the sensual eye
Allowed no flaw upon the skin
And burnt away wrinkle and feature,
Fed with pure spirit from within

Nesciently that vision works
Just so the pure night-eye, the moon,
Labours, a monumental mason,
To gloss over a world of stone

Look how she marbled heath and terrace,
Effacing boundary and date
She took the sky, earth was below her
A shining shell, a featherweight

No more may pupil love bend over
A plane theorem, black and white
The interlocking hours revolve,
The globe goes lumbering into light

Admiral earth breaks out his colours
Bright at the forepeak of the day,
Hills in their hosts escort the sun
And valleys welcome him their way

Shadow takes depth and shape turns solid
Far-ranging, the creative eye
Sees arable, marsh, enclosed and common,
Assents to multiplicity.

X

Twenty weeks near past
Since the seed took to earth
Winter has done his worst
Let upland snow ignore,
Earth wears a smile betrays
What summer she has in store
She feels insurgent forces
Gathering at the core,
And a spring rumour courses
Through her, till the cold extreme
Sleep of grove and grass is
Stirred, begins to dream
So, when the violins gather
And soar to a final theme,
Broadcast on winds of ether
That golden seed extends
Beneath the sun-eye, the father,
To ear at the earth's ends

XI

There is a dark room,
The locked and shuttered womb,
Where negative's made positive
Another dark room,
The blind, the bolted tomb,
Where positives change to negative

We may not undo
That or escape this, who
Have birth and death coiled in our bones
Nothing we can do
Will sweeten the real rue,
That we begin, and end, with groans

XII

As one who wanders into old workings
Dazed by the noonday, desiring coolness,
Has found retreat barred by fall of rockface,
Gropes through galleries where granite bruises
Taut palm and panic patters close at heel,
Must move forward as tide to the moon's nod,
As mouth to breast in blindness is beckoned
Nightmare nags at his elbow and narrows
Horizon to pinpoint, hope to hand's breadth
Slow drip the seconds, time is stalactite,
For nothing intrudes here to tell the time,
Sun marches not, nor moon with muffled step
He wants an opening,—only to break out,
To see the dark glass cut by day's diamond,
To relax again in the lap of light

But we seek a new world through old workings,
Whose hope lies like seed in the loins of earth,
Whose dawn draws gold from the roots of darkness
Not shy of light nor shrinking from shadow
Like Jesuits in jungle we journey
Deliberately bearing to brutish tribes
Christ's assurance, arts of agriculture
As a train that travels underground track
Feels current flashed from far-off dynamos,
Our wheels whirling with impetus elsewhere
Generated we run, are ruled by rails
Train shall spring from tunnel to terminus,
Out on to plain shall the pioneer plunge,
Earth reveal what veins fed, what hill covered
Lovely the leap, explosion into light

XIII

But think of passion and pain
Those absolute dictators will enchain
The low, exile the princely parts
They close a door between the closest hearts
Their verdict stands in steel,
From whose blank rigour kings may not appeal

When in love's airs we'd lie,
Like elms we leaned together with a sigh
And sighing severed, and no rest
Had till that wind was past
Then drooped in a green sickness over the plain
Wanting our wind again

Now pain will come for you,
Take you into a desert without dew,
Labouring through the unshadowed day
To blast the sharp scarps, open up a way
There for the future line
But I shall wait at the railhead alone

Small comfort may be found,
Though our embraced roots grope in the same ground,
Though on one permanent way we run,
Yes, under the same sun.
Contact the means, but travellers report
The ends are poles apart.

XIV

Now the full-throated daffodils,
Our trumpeters in gold,
Call resurrection from the ground
And bid the year be bold

To-day the almond tree turns pink,
The first flush of the spring,
Winds loll and gossip through the town
Her secret whispering

Now too the bird must try his voice
Upon the morning air,
Down drowsy avenues he cries
A novel great affair

He tells of royalty to be,
How with her train of rose
Summer to coronation comes
Through waving wild hedgerows

To-day crowds quicken in a street,
The fish leaps in the flood
Look there, gasometer rises,
And here bough swells to bud

For our love's luck, our stowaway,
Stretches in his cabin,
Our youngster joy barely concerned
Shows up beneath the skin

Our joy was but a gusty thing
Without sinew or wit,
An infant flyaway, but now
We make a man of it

XV

I have come so far upon my journey
This is the frontier, this is where I change,
And wait between two worlds to take refreshment.

I see the mating plover at play
Blowing themselves about over the green wheat,
And in a bank I catch
The shy scent of the primrose that prevails
Strangely upon the heart Here is
The last flutter of the wind-errant soul,
Earth's first faint tug at the earthbound soul

So, waiting here between winter and summer,
Conception and fruition, I
Take what refreshment may be had from skies
Uncertain as the wind, prepare
For a new route, a change of constitution

Some change of constitution, where
Has been for years an indeterminate quarrel
Between a fevered head and a cold heart,
Rulers who cannot rule, rebels who will not
Rebel, an age divided
Between to-morrow's wink, yesterday's warning

And yet this self, contains
Tides continents and stars—a myriad selves,
Is small and solitary as one grass-blade
Passed over by the wind
Amongst a myriad grasses on the prairie

You in there, my son, my daughter,
Will you become dictator, resolve the factions?
Will you be my ambassador
And make my peace with the adjacent empires?

XVI

More than all else might you,
My son, my daughter,
Be metal to bore through
The impermeable clay
And rock that overlay
The living water.

Through that artesian well
Myself may out,
Finding its own level.
This way the waste land turns
To arable, and towns
Are rid of drought

XVII

Down hidden causeways of the universe
Through space-time's cold
Indifferent airs I strolled,
A pointless star till in my course
I happened on the sun
And in a spurt of fire to her did run

That heavenly body as I neared began
To make response,
And heaved with fire at once
One wave of gathered heat o'erran
Her all and came to a head,
A mountain based upon an ardent bed

(Faith may move mountains, but love's twice as strong,
For love can raise
A mountain where none was
Also can prove astronomers wrong
Who deem the stars too hot
For life —here is a star that has begot)

Soon from the mother body torn and whirled
By tidal pull
And left in space to cool
That mountain top will be a world
Treading its own orbit,
And look to her for warmth, to me for wit.

XVIII

It is time to think of you,
Shortly will have your freedom
As anemones that renew
Earth's innocence, be welcome
Out of your folded sleep
Come, as the western winds come
To pasture with the sheep
On a weary of winter height
Lie like a pool unwrinkled
That takes the sky to heart,
Where stars and shadows are mingled
And suns run gold with heat
Return as the winds return,
Heir to an old estate
Of upland, flower and tarn

But born to essential dark,
To an age that toes the line
And never o'ersteps the mark
Take off your coat grow lean
Suffer humiliation
Patrol the passes alone,
And eat your iron ration
Else, wag as the world wags—
One more mechanical jane
Or gentleman in wax
Is it here we shall regain
Championship? Here awakes
A white hope shall preserve
From flatterers, pimps and fakes
Integrity and nerve?

XIX

Do not expect again a phoenix hour,
The triple-towered sky, the dove complaining,
Sudden the rain of gold and heart's first ease
Tranced under trees by the eldritch light of sundown

By a blazed trail our joy will be returning
One burning hour throws light a thousand ways,
And hot blood stays into familiar gestures
The best years wait, the body's plenitude.

Consider then, my lover, this is the end
Of the lark's ascending, the hawk's unearthly hover
Spring season is over soon and first heatwave,
Grave-browed with cloud ponders the huge horizon

Draw up the dew Swell with pacific violence.
Take shape in silence. Grow as the clouds grew
Beautiful brood the cornlands, and you are heavy,
Leafy the boughs—they also hide big fruit

XX

Sky-wide an estuary of light
Ebbs amid cloud banks out of sight
At her star-anchorage shall swing
Earth, the old freighter, till morning

Ride above your shadow and trim
Cargo till the stars grow dim
Weigh then from the windless river,
You've a treasure to deliver

Behold the incalculable seas
Change face for every cloud and breeze
But a prime mover works inside,
The constant the integral tide

Though black-bordered fancies vex
You and veering moods perplex,
Underneath's a current knowing
Well enough what way it's going

Stroked by their windy shadows lie
The grainlands waving at the sky
That golden grace must all be shed
To fill granaries, to make bread

Do not grieve for beauty gone
Limbs that ran to meet the sun
Lend their lightness to another,
Child shall recreate the mother

XXI

Your eyes are not open. You are alone
You then, to be my first-born, this is for you.

May know, as I, sleet from a bland sky falling,
Perfidious landmark, false dawn
Look out through panes at a spoilt holiday,
And weep, taking eternity to bed.

When the hair grows, perceive a world
Officered by semi-cads and second baboons,
Be stood in the far corner

Later, after each dream of beauty ethereal,
Bicycling against wind to see the vicar's daughter,
Be disappointed.

And yet there is yet worse to come
Desire worn to the bone leaves room for pride's attrition.
For they shall ride in bloody uniform,
Offering choice of a sooner death or a later,
Mark you to ground, stop the earths,
Jog home to supper under a bland sky

Yes, you may know, as I do, self foreshortened,
Blocked out with blackness finally all the works of days
O you who turn the wheel and look to both sides,
Consider Phlebas, who shall be taller and handsomer than
you

One shall rub shoulders with the firmfoot oak
And with all shifting shade join hands
Shall have the heels of time, shall shoot from afar
And find the loopholes of the armoured train

When the machine's run in, will get
Free play, better no doubt for the contracting
Of an indeterminate world

Day and night will make armistice for this one,
Entering the walled garden who knows the hour of spirit
Reconciled to flesh

Then falling leaf falls to renew
Acquaintance with old contours, with a world in outline
Is time now to set house in order, bury
The dead and count the living, consolidate
The soul against proved enemies
Time with the lengthening shadow to grow tall.

Thus the free spirit emerges, in courts at ease,
Content with standing-room, pleased in a small allotment.

XXII

In this sector when barrage lifts and we
Are left alone with death,
There'll be no time to question strategy
But now, midsummer offensive not begun,
We wait and draw mutinous breath,
Wondering what to gain
We stake these fallow fields and the good sun

This has happened to other men before,
Have hung on the lip of danger
And have heard death moving about next door
Yet I look up at the sky's billowing,
Surprised to find so little change there,
Though in that ample ring
Heaven knows what power lies coiled ready to spring

What were we at, the moment when we kissed—
Extending the franchise
To an indifferent class, would we enlist
Fresh power who know not how to be so great?
Beget and breed a life—what's this
But to perpetuate
Man's labour, to enlarge a rank estate?

Planted out here some virtue still may flower,
But our dead follies too—
A shock of buried weeds to turn it sour
Draw up conditions—will the heir conform?
Or thank us for the favour, who
Inherits a bankrupt firm,
Worn-out machinery, an exhausted farm?

XXIII

This was not the mind's undertaking,
But as outrageous heat
Breaking in thunder across hills
Sweetens our aching dust.

Such is not answerable to mind,
Is random as a flake
Blindly down-dancing here or clouds
That take their windy course

Thin from thin air reason issues,
We live on living earth
Whose trees enlarge their fruit without
Misgiving or excuse.

Reason is but a riddle of sand,
Its substance shifts in storm
Space-spanned, God-girdled, love will keep
Its form, being planned of bone

XXIV

Speak then of constancy Thin eyelids weakly thus
Batted to beauty, lips that reject her, is not this,
Nor lust of eye (Christ said it) denied the final kiss

Rather a set response, metal-to-magnet affair,
Flows with the tidal blood, like red of rose or fire
Is a fast dye outlasts the fabric of desire

Happy this river reach sleeps with the sun at noon,
Takes dews and rains to her wide bed, refusing none
That full-filled peace, yet constant to one sea will run

So melt we down small toys to make each other rich,
Although no getting or spending can extend our reach
Whose poles are love, nor close who closer lie than leech

For think—throbbing our hearts linked so by endless band,
So geared together, need not otherwise be bound

XXV

And since, though young, I know
Not to expect much good,
Our dreams from first to last
Being treacherous underfoot,

Best I dare wish for you,
That once (my son, my daughter)
You may get home on rock
Feet tired of treading water.

Lucky, will have also
An outward grace to ease
The axles of your world
And keep the parts at peace

Not the waste random stuff
That stops the gannet's wing,
I mean, such oil ensures
A turbine's smooth running

XXVI

Beauty breaks ground, O, in strange places
Seen after cloudburst down the bone-dry watercourses,
In Texas a great gusher, a grain-
Elevator in the Ukraine plain,
To a new generation turns new faces

Here too fountains will soon be flowing
Empty the hills where love was lying late, was playing,
Shall spring to life we shall find there
Milk and honey for love's heir,
Shadow from sun also, deep ground for growing

My love is a good land The stranger
Entering here was sure he need prospect no further.
Acres that were the eyes' delight
Now feed another appetite.
What formed her first for seed, for crop must change her

This is my land I've overheard it
Making a promise out of clay All is recorded—
Early green, drought, ripeness, rainfall,
Our village fears and festivals,
When the first tractor came and how we cheered it.

And as the wind whose note will deepen
In the upgrowing tree, who runs for miles to open
His throat above the wood, my song
With that increasing life grew strong,
And will have there a finished form to sleep in

XXVII

Dropping the few last days, are drops of lead,
Heavier hang than a lifetime on the heart
Past the limetrees that drug the air jackdaws
Slanting across a sluggish wind go home
On either side of the Saltway fields of clover
Cling to their sweetness under a threatening sky
Numb with crisis all, cramped with waiting
Shallowly breathes the wind or holds his breath,
As in ambush waiting to leap at convoy
Must pass this way—there can be no evasions
Surly the sky up there and means mischief,
The parchment sky that hourly tightens above us,
Screwed to storm-pitch, where thunder shall roll and roll
Intolerably postponing the last movement

Now the young challenger, too tired to sidestep,
Hunches to give or take decisive blow.
The climbers from the highest camp set out
Saying goodbye to comrades on the glacier,
A day of rock between them and the summit
That will require their record or their bones
Now is a charge laid that will split the hill-face,
Tested the wires, the plunger ready to hand
For time ticks nearer to a rebel hour,
Charging of barricades, bloodshed in city
The watcher in the window looking out
At the eleventh hour on sun and shadow,
On fixed abodes and the bright air between,
Knows for the first time what he stands to lose

Crisis afar deadens the nerve, it cools
The blood and hoods imagination's eye,
Whether we apprehend it or remember
Is fighting on the frontier little leaks through
Of possible disaster, but one morning
Shells begin to drop in the capital
So I, indoors for long enough remembering
The round house on the cliff, the springy slopes,
The well in the wood, nor doubting to revisit
But if to see new sunlight on old haunts
Swallows and men come back *but if* come back
From lands *but if* beyond our view *but if*
She dies? Why then, here is a space to let,
The owner gone abroad, never returning

XXVIII

Though bodies are apart
The dark hours so confine
And fuse our hearts, sure, death
Will find no way between.

Narrow this hour, that bed,
But room for us to explore
Pain's long-drawn equator,
The farthest ice of fear

Storm passes east, recurs
The beakéd lightnings stoop
The sky falls down the clouds
Are wrung to the last drop

Another day is born now
Woman, your work is done.
This is the end of labour.
Come out into the sun!

XXIX

Come out in the sun, for a man is born to-day!
Early this morning whistle in the cutting told
Train was arriving, hours overdue, delayed
By snow-drifts, engine-trouble, Act of God, who cares
now?—

For here alights the distinguished passenger
Take a whole holiday in honour of this!

Kipfer's back from heaven, Bendien to Holland,
Larwood and Voce in the Notts eleven
Returning also the father the mother,
Chastened and cheered by underworld excursion,
Alive returning from the black country,
Take a whole holiday in honour of this

Now shall the airman vertically banking
Out of the blue write a new sky-sign,
The nine tramp steamers rusting in the estuary
Get up full pressure for a trade revival,
The crusty landlord renew the lease, and everyone
Take a whole holiday in honour of this

To-day let director forget the deficit,
Schoolmaster his handicap, hostess her false face
Let phantasiist take charge of flesh-and-blood situation,
Petty-officer be rapt in the Seventh Symphony
For here a champion is born and commands you
Take a whole holiday in honour of this

Wherever radiance from ashes arises—
Willowherb glowing on abandoned slagheaps,

Dawn budding scarlet in a bed of darkness,
Life from exhausted womb outstriving—
There shall the spirit be lightened and gratefully
Take a whole holiday in honour of this

EPILOGUE

LETTER TO W. H. AUDEN

A mole first, out of riddling passages
You came up for a breather into my field,
Then back to your engineering, a scheme conjectured
From evidence of earth not cast at random
The surly vegetable said "What's this
Butting through sand for unapparent reasons?"
The animal said "This fellow is no runner"
Mineral said "Brother, you like the dark"
What are you at down there, nosing among
Saxon skulls, roots of our genealogies?
This is the field of ghosts There are no clues here,
But dead creators packed in close fibre
Perhaps you are going straight to some point, straighter
And further than these furrows I drive in daylight

Daffodils now, the pretty débutantes,
Are curtsying at the first court of the year
Their schoolgirl smell unmans young lechers You
Preferred, I remember, the plump boy, the crocus
Enough of that They only lie at your feet
But I, who saw the sapling, prophesied
A growth superlative and branches writing
On heaven a new signature For I
Looked at no garden shrub, chantry of thrushes,
But such a tree as, gripping its rock perch
On a northern fell within the sound of hammers,
Gives shadow to the stonechat and reminder
Of chastity to men grown venerable
Will give its name to that part of the country

This was the second time that you had pulled
The rusty trigger summoning the stragglers
Once more the bird goes packing, the skeleton
Sets teeth against a further dissolution
And what have we to hope for who are bound,
Though we strip off the last assurance of flesh
For expedition, to lay our bones somewhere
Say that a rescue party should see fit
To do us some honour, publish our diaries,
Send home the relics—how should we thank them?
The march is what we asked for, it is ended
Still, let us wear the flesh away and leave
Nothing for birds, anatomy to men

THE MAGNETIC MOUNTAIN

TO W H AUDEN

PART ONE

Come, then, companions, this is the spring of blood,
Heart's heyday, movement of masses, beginning of good.

R E WARNER

NOW to be with you, elate, unshared,
My kestrel joy, O hoverer in wind,
Over the quarry furiously at rest
Chaired on shoulders of shouting wind

Where's that unique one, wind and wing married,
Aloft in contact of earth and ether,
Feathery my comet, Oh too often
From heav'n harried by carrion cares

No searcher may hope to flush that fleet one
Not to be found by gun or glass,
In old habits, last year's hunting-ground,
Whose beat is wind-wide, whose perch a split second

But surely will meet him, late or soon,
Who turns a corner into new territory,
Spirit mating afresh shall discern him
On the world's noon-top purely poised

Void are the valleys, in town no trace,
And dumb the sky-dividing hills
Swift outrider of lumbering earth
Oh hasten hither my kestrel joy!

2

But Two there are, shadow us everywhere
And will not let us be till we are dead,
Hardening the bones, keeping the spirit spare,
Original in water, earth and air,
Our bitter cordial, our daily bread.

THE MAGNETIC MOUNTAIN

Turning over old follies in ante-room,
For first-born waiting or for late reprieve,
Watching the safety-valve, the slackening loom,
Abed, abroad, at every turn and tomb
A shadow starts, a hand is on your sleeve

O you, my comrade, now or to-morrow flayed
Alive, crazed by the nibbling nerve, my friend
Whom hate has cornered or whom love betrayed,
By hunger sapped, trapped by a stealthy tide,
Brave for so long but whimpering in the end

Such are the temporal princes, fear and pain,
Whose borders march with the ice-fields of death,
And from that servitude escape there's none
Till in the grave we set up house alone
And buy our liberty with our last breath

3

Somewhere beyond the railheads
Of reason, south or north,
Lies a magnetic mountain
Riveting sky to earth

No line is laid so far
Ties rusting in a stack
And sleepers—dead men's bones—
Mark a defeated track

Kestrel who yearly changes
His tenement of space
At the last hovering
May signify that place.

Iron in the soul,
Spirit steeled in fire,
Needle trembling on truth—
These shall draw me there

The planets keep their course,
Blindly the bee comes home,
And I shall need no sextant
To prove I'm getting warm

Near that miraculous mountain
Compass and clock must fail,
For space stands on its head there
And time chases its tail

There's iron for the asking
Will keep all winds at bay,
Girders to take the leaden
Strain of a sagging sky

Oh there's a mine of metal,
Enough to make me rich
And build right over chaos
A cantilever bridge

4

Make no mistake, this is where you get off,
Sue with her suckling, Cyril with his cough,
Bert with a blazer and a safety-razor,
Old John Braddleum and Terence the toff.
And now, may I ask, have you made any plans?
You can't go further along these lines,
Positively this is the end of the track,
It's rather late and there's no train back.

So if you are wanting to get anywhere
You must use your feet or take to the air,
The penny-a-liner, the seven-course-diner,
Prebendary Cute and the water-diviner—
Are you sure you don't want to go somewhere?
"Is it mountain there or mirage across the sand?"
That's Terra Incognita, Bogey-Man's-Land
Why not give it a trial? You might go further
And fare much worse "No, no, that's going rather
Too far, besides, the whole thing may just be a sell "
Then book your bed-sitter at the station hotel
Or stay at the terminus till you grow verminous,
Eating chocolate creams from the slot-machines,
But don't blame me when you feel unwell
Line was a good line, ballasted on grit,
Surveyors weren't fools, platelayers didn't quit,
Viaduct for river, embankment for marsh,
Cutting for tough rock, signal for smash
Can you keep the system going? Can you replace
Rolling stock? Is everything all right at the base?
Supposing they cut your communications
Can you live on here without any rations?
Then don't blame me when you're up the tree,
No trains coming through and you're feeling blue,
When you're left high and dry and you want to cry,
When you're in the cart and you've got a weak heart,
When you're up the pole and you can't find your soul,
When the shops are all looted and you've run out of coal
So it's me for the mountain But before I begin
I'm taking a light engine back along the line
For a last excursion, a tour of inspection,
To clear the head and to aid the digestion

Then I'll hit the trail for that promising land,
May catch up with Wystan and Rex my friend,
Go mad in good company, find a good country,
Make a clean sweep or make a clean end

5

Let us be off! Our steam
Is deafening the dome
The needle in the gauge
Points to a long-banked rage,
And trembles there to show
What a pressure's below
Valve cannot vent the strain
Nor iron ribs refrain
That furnace in the heart
Come on, make haste and start
Coupling-rod and wheel
Welded of patient steel,
Piston that will not stir
Beyond the cylinder
To take in its stride
A teeming countryside

A countryside that gleams
In the sun's weeping beams,
Where wind-pump, byre and barrow
Are mellowed to mild sorrow,
Agony and sweat
Grown over with regret
What golden vesper hours
Halo the old grey towers,

What honeyed bells in valleys
Embalm our faiths and follies!
Here are young daffodils
Wind-wanton, and the hills
Have made their peace with heaven
Oh lovely the heart's haven,
Meadows of endless May,
A spirit's holiday!

Traveller, take care,
Pick no flowers there!

PART TWO

Drive your cart and your plough over the bones
of the dead.

WILLIAM BLAKE

6

N EARING again the legendary isle
Where sirens sang and mariners were skinned,
We wonder now what was there to beguile
That such stout fellows left their bones behind

Those chorus-girls are surely past their prime,
Voices grow shrill and paint is wearing thin,
Lips that sealed up the sense from gnawing time
Now beg the favour with a graveyard grin

We have no flesh to spare and they can't bite,
Hunger and sweat have stripped us to the bone,
A skeleton crew we toil upon the tide
And mock the theme-song meant to lure us on

No need to stop the ears, avert the eyes
From purple rhetoric of evening skies

7

First Defendant speaks

I that was two am one,
We that were one are two
Warm in my walled garden the flower grew first,
Transplanted it ran wild on the estate
Why should it ever need a new sun?
Not navel-string in the cold dawn cut,
Nor a weaned appetite, nor going to school
That autumn did it Simply, one day
He crossed the frontier and I did not follow
Returning, spoke another language.

Blessed are they that mourn,
That shear the spring grass from an early grave
They are not losers, never have known the hour
When an indifferent exile
Passes through the metropolis *en route*
For Newfoundland

Mother earth, understand me You send up
So many leaves to meet the light,
So many flights of birds,
That keep you all their days in shade and song,
And the blown leaf is part of you again
And the frozen blackbird falls into your breast.
Shall not the life-giver be life-receiver?
Am I alone to stand
Outside the natural economy?
Pasteurise mother's milk,
Spoon out the waters of comfort in kilogrammes,
Let love be clinic, let creation's pulse
Keep Greenwich time, guard creature
Against creator, and breed your supermen!
But not from me for I
Must have life unconditional, or none
So, like a willow, all its wood curtailed,
I stand by the last ditch of narrowing world,
And stir not, though I see
Pit-heads encroach or glacier crawl down.

This was your world and this I owe you,
Room for growing, a site for building,
The braced sinew, the hands agreeing,
Mind foreseeing and nerve for facing

You were my world my breath my seasons
Where blood ran easy and springs failed not,
Kind was clover to feet exploring
A broad earth and all to discover
Simple that world, of two dimensions,
Of stone mansions and good examples,
Each image actual, nearness was no
Fear and distance without a mirage
Dawn like a greyhound leapt the hill-tops,
A million leaves held up the noonday,
Evening was slow with bells pealing,
And night compelling to breast and pillow
This was my world, Oh this you gave me,
Safety for seed, petal uncurled there,
Love asked no proving nor price, a country
Sunny for play, for spring manceuvres

Woman, ask no more of me,
Chill not the blood with jealous feud
This is a separate country now,
Will pay respects but no tribute
Demand no atavistic rites,
Preference in trade or tithe of grain,
Bound by the limiting matrix I
Increased you once, will not again.
My vision's patented, my plant
Set up, my constitution whole,
New fears, old tunes cannot induce
Nostalgia of the sickly soul
Would you prolong your day, transfuse
Young blood into your veins? Beware

Lest one oppressed by autumn's weight
May thrill to feel death in the air
Let love be like a natural day
That folds her work and takes to bed,
Ploughland and tree stand out in black,
Enough memorial for the dead

9

Second Defendant speaks

Let us now praise famous men,
Not your earth-shakers, not the dynamiters,
But who in the Home Counties or the Khyber,
Trimming their nails to meet an ill wind,
Facing the Adversary with a clean collar,
Justified the system
Admire the venerable pile that bred them,
Bones are its foundations,
The pinnacles are stone abstractions,
Whose halls are whispering-galleries designed
To echo voices of the past, dead tongues
White hopes of England here
Are taught to rule by learning to obey,
Bend over before vested interests,
Kiss the rod, salute the quarter-deck,
Here is no savage discipline
Of peregrine swooping, of fire destroying,
But a civil code, no capital offender
But the cool cad, the man who goes too far.
Ours the curriculum
Neither of building birds nor wasteful waters,
Bound in book not violent in vein

Here we inoculate with dead ideas
Against blood-epidemics, against
The infection of faith and the excess of life.
Our methods are up to date, we teach
Through head and not by heart,
Language with gramophones and sex with charts,
Prophecy by deduction, prayer by numbers
For honours see prospectus those who leave us
Will get a post and pity the poor,
Their eyes glaze at strangeness,
They are never embarrassed, have a word for everything,
Living on credit, dying when the heart stops,
Will wear black armlets and stand a moment in silence
For the passing of an era, at their own funeral

IO

You'll be leaving soon and it's up to you, boys,
Which shall it be? You must make your choice
There's a war on, you know Will you take your stand
In obsolete forts or in no-man's-land?
That ancestral castle, that picturesque prestige
Looks well on paper but will it stand a siege?
All modern conveniences—still, I should change
Position now the enemy knows the range
Blockade may begin before you're much older—
Will you tighten the belt and shrug the shoulder
Or plough up the playing-fields, sow new soil,
Build a reservoir and bore for oil?
"Take a sporting chance," they tell you But will it suffice
To wear a scrum-cap against falling skies?
"Play the game" but supposing the other chap kicks,
You'd like to have learnt some rough-house tricks

It boils down to this—do you really want to win
Or prefer the fine gesture of giving in?
Are you going to keep or to make the rules,
Die with fighters or be dead with fools?
Men are wanted who will volunteer
To go aloft and cut away tangled gear,
Break through to blocked galleries below pit-head,
Get in touch with living and raise from the dead
Men to catch spies, fly aeroplanes,
Harrow derelict acres and mend the drains
There'll be work for you all if you're fain without feigning
To give up toys and go into training
But you'll have to forget a great deal you've learnt,
The licence of Saturn, lacerations of Lent,
Self-abuse, your dignity, the Bad and the Good,
Heroism in phantasy and fainting at blood
And you'll have to remember a great deal you've forgotten,
How to love a girl and how to sew a button,
Tiger's shock-tactics, elephant's defence,
The integral spirit and the communal sense
Can you sing at your work? Enforce discipline
Without insignia? Then you've still a chance to win

I I

Third Defendant speaks

I have always acted for the best
My business is the soul I have given it rope,
Coaxed it heavenward, but would not let it escape me
The peoples have sought a Ruler
I conjured one for each after his own image,
For savage a Dark Demon, for Hebrew a Patriot,

T E M A G N E T I C M O U N T A I N

r Christian a Comforter, for atheist a Myth
e rulers have sought an Ally
ave called down thunders on the side of authority,
ghtnings to galvanise the law,
omising the bread of heaven to the hungry of earth,
unting the spirit into grassy sidings,
have served the temporal princes
iere have been men ere now, disturbers of the peace,
aders out of my land of milk and honey,
escribing harder diet,
'hom I thrashed, outlawed, slew, or if persisting
eified, shelving them and their dynamite doctrines
p in the clouds out of the reach of children
have always acted for the best
lung on the skirts of progress, the tail of revolution,
eady to drug the defeated and bless the victor
am a man apart
Who sits in the dark professing a revelation
xploiting the Word with the letter I turn
oy into sacraments, the Holy Ghost to a formula
but an impious generation is here,
et in the light, melt down my mysteries,
ommission the moon to serve my altars
And make my colleagues village entertainers
That tree of Grace, for years I have tended,
Is a slow-grower, not to be transplanted,
They'll cut it down for pit-props,
That harvest of Faith, not without blood ripened,
They have ploughed in, their dynamos chant
Canticles of a new power my holy land is blasted,
The crust crumbles, the veins run vinegar.

I 2

Oh subterranean fires, break out!
Tornadoes, pity not
The petty bourgeois of the soul,
The middleman of God!

Who ruins farm and factory
To keep a private mansion
Is a bad landlord, he shall get
No honourable mention

Who mobbed the kestrel out of the air,
Who made the tiger tame,
Who lost the blood's inheritance
And found the body's shame,

Who raised his hands to brand a Cain
And bless a submarine—
Time is up the medicine-man
Must take his medicine.

The winter evening holds her peace
And makes a crystal pause,
Frozen are all the streams of light,
Silent about their source

Comrade, let us look to earth,
Be stubborn, act and sleep.
Here at our feet the lasting skull
Keeps a stiff upper lip

Feeling the weight of a long winter,
Grimaces underground,
But never again will need to ask
Why spirit was flesh-bound.

And we whom winter days oppress
May find some work to hand,
Perfect our plans, renew parts,
Break hedges down, plough land

So when primroses pave the way
And the sun warms the stone,
We may receive the exile spirit
Coming into its own

13

Fourth Defendant speaks

To sit at head of one's own table,
To overlook a warm familiar landscape,
Have large cupboards for small responsibilities—
Surely that does outweigh
The rent veil and the agonies to follow?
Me the Almighty fixed, from Eve fallen,
Heart-deep in earth, a pointer to star fields,
Suffering sapflow, fruitage, early barrenness,
Changeable reputed, but to change constant,
Fickle of fashion no more than the months are;
Daily depend on surroundings for sustenance,
On what my roots reach, what my leaves inhale here.
Grant me a rich ground, wrapped in airs temperate,
Not where nor'-easters threaten the flint scarps,
Consequence then shall I have, men's admiration
Now, and my bones shall be fuel for the future

Yet have I always failed
For he, who should have been my prime possession,
Was not to be possessed
I leant o'er him, a firmament of shadow,
But he looked up through me and saw the stars
I would have bound him in the earth-ways,
Fluid, immediate, the child of nature
But he made bricks of earth, iron from fire,
Turned waves to power, winds to communication,
Setting up Art against Chaos, subjecting
My flux to the synthetic frost of reason
I am left with a prone man,
Virtue gone out of him, who in the morning
Will rise to join Crusades or assist the Harlequins
Though I persuade him that his stars are mine eyes'
Refraction, that wisdom's best expressed in
The passive mood,—here's no change for the better:
I was the body slave, am now the spirit's
Come, let me contemplate my own
Mysteries, a dark glass may save my face

I 4

Live you by love confined,
There is no nearer nearness,
Break not his light bounds,
The stars' and seas' harness
There is nothing beyond,
We have found the land's end
We'll take no mortal wound
Who felt him in the furnace,
Drowned in his fierceness,
By his midsummer browned

Nor ever lose awareness
Of nearness and farness
Who've stood at earth's heart careless
Of suns and storms around,
Who have leant on the hedge of the wind,
On the last ledge of darkness

We are where love has come
To live he is that river
Which flows and is the same,
He is not the famous deceiver
Nor early-flowering dream
Content you Be at home
In me There's but one room
Of all the house you may never
Share, deny or enter
There, as a candle's beam
Stands firm and will not waver
Spire-straight in a close chamber,
As though in shadowy cave a
Stalagmite of flame,
The integral spirit climbs
The dark in light for ever.

15

Consider. These are they
Who have a stake in earth
But risk no wing on air,
Walk not a planet path.

Theirs the reward of all
That live by sap alone,

Flourishing but to show
Which way the wind has gone

While oaks of pedigree
Stand over a rich seam,
Another sinks the shaft,
Fills furnace, gets up steam

These never would break through
The orbit of their year,
Admit no altered stress,
Decline a change of gear

The tree grips soil, the bird
Knows how to use the wind,
But the full man must live
Rooted yet unconfined

PART THREE

Never yield before the barren

D H LAWRENCE

16

LOOK west, Wystan, lone flyer, birdman, my bully boy!
 Plague of locusts, creeping barrage, has left earth bare
 Suckling and centenarian are up in air,
 No wing-room for Wystan, no joke for kestrel joy

Sky-scrappers put high questions that quench the wind's
 breath,
 Whose shadow still comes short of truth, but kills the grass
 Power-house chimneys choke sun, ascetic pylons pass
 Bringing light to the dark-livers, charged to deal death.

Firework fêtes, love displays, levitation of dead,
 Salvation writ in smoke will reassure the town,
 While comfy in captive balloons easily brought down
 Sit frail philosophers, gravity gone to the head

Gain altitude, Auden, then let the base beware!
 Migrate, chaste my kestrel, you need a change of air!

17

First Enemy speaks

Begin perhaps with jokes across the table,
 Bathing before breakfast, undressing frankly,
 Trials of strength, innocent invasions,
 Concealing velvet hand in iron grip
 Play the man, let woman wait indoors.
I do like doing things with you.

Shoot home the bolt, draw close the silken cordon
 Regrets for youth, malice at mutual friends,

Excluding company with a private smile,
Longer looks noting, change of tune Ah, now
To find one's touch, anticipate the last movement!
You are so different from the others

This is my act, who can play Cleopatra,
Can hear state secrets, see the guarded plans
A man my empire, darling I proclaim
Through sultry eyes dominion appetites—
To be called a queen, be a subject for sonnets
You can't really think me beautiful?

Then set the stage, lights for a final tableau—
I never shall love the dark since Maurice died—
Buzzards are wheeling above, horns blowing around,
We come to a point, circle the trembling prey
In sunny fern or many-mirrored bedroom
I love to watch your face

Now am I in the very lists of love,
Clutching the terminals may surely hope
To make a contact Feel, body, Oh fail not!
Shall the harsh friction the gritted teeth of lust
Not generate a spark, bring me to life?
I've never felt like this before

So, so again And he that was alive
Is dead Or sleeps A stranger to these parts
Nerve insulated, flesh unfused, this is
No consummation, yet a dear achievement
Reach for the powder-puff, I have sinned greatly
I suppose you hate me, now

I

Not hate nor love, but say
Refreshment after rain,
A lucid hour, though this
Need not occur again

You shall no further feast
Your pride upon my flesh
Cry for the moon here's but
An instantaneous flash

My wells, my rooted good
Go deeper than you dare
Seek not my sun and moon,
They are centred elsewhere

I know a fairer land,
Whose furrows are of fire,
Whose hills are a pure metal
Shining for all to share

And there all rivers run
To magnify the sea,
Whose waves recur for ever
In calm equality

Hands off! The dykes are down
This is no time for play
Hammer is poised and sickle
Sharpened I cannot stay.

19

Second Enemy speaks

Now sir, now madam, we're all plain people here,
Used to plain speaking we know what is what,
How to stretch a point and where to draw the line

You want to buy I have the goods

Read about rector's girls

Duke's disease synthetic pearls

Latest sinners tasty dinners

Plucky dogs shot Sinn Feiners

Flood in China rape in Wales

Murderer's tears scenes at sales

That's the stuff aren't you thrilled

Sit back and see the world

Yet, though abiding by the law and the profits,

I have a solemn duty and shall not shirk it

Who stand *in loco parentis* to the British Public,

We must educate our bastards

Professor Jeans spills the beans

Dean Inge tells you a thing

A man in a gown gives you the low-down

A man with a beard says something weird

Famous whore anticipates war

Woman mayor advises prayer

A grey-haired gugga says leave it to mother

Run off and play no more lessons to-day.

And thirdly, brethren, you must be saved from yourselves,

From that secret voice, that positive contagion

I'll have no long faces on this ship while I'm captain

And you know what happens to mutineers

Is the boss unkind? Have you dropped a stitch?

Smile! All together! You'll soon be better
Have you got a grouch? Do you feel an itch?
There, there! Sit down and write uncle a letter
Lock the front door, here are your slippers,
Get out your toys and don't make a noise,
Don't tease the keepers, eat up your kippers,
And you'll have a treat one day if you're good boys

20

Fireman and farmer, father and flapper,
I'm speaking to you, sir, please drop that paper,
Don't you know it's poison? Have you lost all hope?
Aren't you ashamed, ma'am, to be taking dope?
There's a nasty habit that starts in the head
And creeps through the veins till you go all dead
Insured against accident? But that won't prove
Much use when one morning you find you can't move

They tell you all's well with our lovely England
And God's in our capital Isn't it grand
Where the offal of action, the rinsings of thought
From a stunted peer for a penny can be bought?
It seems a bargain, but in the long run
Will cost you your honour, your crops and your son
They're selling you the dummy, for God's sake don't buy
it!
Baby, that bottle's not clean, don't try it!

You remember that girl who turned the gas on—
They drove her to it, they couldn't let her alone
That young inventor—you all know his name—
They used the plans and he died of their fame.

Careful, climber, they're getting at your nerve!
Leader, that's a bribe, they'd like you to serve!
Bull, I don't want to give you a nightmare,
But, keep still a moment, are you quite sure you're there?

As for you, Bimbo, take off that false face!
You've ceased to be funny, you're in disgrace
We can see the spy through that painted grin,
You may talk patriotic but you can't take us in.
You've poisoned the reservoirs, released your germs
On firesides, on foundries, on tubes and on farms
You've made yourself cheap with your itch for power
Infecting all comers, a hopeless whore

Scavenger barons and your jackal vassals,
Your pimping press-gang, your unclean vessels,
We'll make you swallow your words at a gulp
And turn you back to your element, pulp.
Don't bluster, Bimbo, it won't do you any good,
We can be much ruder and we're learning to shoot.
Closet Napoleon, you'd better abdicate,
You'd better quit the country before it's too late.

21

Third Enemy speaks

God is a proposition,
And we that prove him are his priests, his chosen.
From bare hypothesis
Of strata and wind, of stars and tides, watch me
Construct his universe,
A working model of my majestic notions,
A sum done in the head.

Last week I measured the light, his little finger,
The rest is a matter of time

God is an electrician,
And they that worship him must worship him
In ampere and in volt
Scrap sun and moon, your twilight of false gods
X is not here or there,
Whose lightning scrawls brief cryptograms on sky,
Easy for us to solve,
Whose motions fit our formulæ, whose temple
Is a pure apparatus

God is a statistician
Offer him all the data, tell him your dreams
What is your lucky number?
How do you react to bombs? Have you a rival?
Do you really love your wife?
Get yourself taped Put soul upon the table
Switch on the arc-lights, watch
Heart's beat, the secret agents of the blood
Let every cell be observed

God is a Good Physician,
Gives fruit for hygiene, crops for calories.
Don't touch that dirty man,
Don't drink from the same cup, sleep in one bed
You know He would not like it
Young men, cut out those visions, they're bad for the eyes
I'll show you face to face
Eugenics, Eupeptics and Euthanasia,
The clinic Trinity

22

Where is he, where? How the man stares!
Do you think he is there, buttoned up in your stars?
Put by that telescope,
You can't bring him nearer, you can't, sir, you haven't a hope.
Is he the answer to your glib equations,
The lord of light, the destroyer of nations?
To be seen on a slide, to be caught on a filter? The Cause
Limed in his own laws?
Analyst, you've missed him Or worse and worst
You've got him inside? You must feel fit to burst
Here, there, everywhere
Or nowhere At least you know where And how much do
you care?

Where then, Oh where? In earth or in air?
The master of mirth, the corrector of care?
Nightingale knows, if any,
And poplar flowing with wind, and high on the sunny
Hill you may find him, and low on the lawn
When every dew-drop is a separate dawn
In the moment before the bombardment, poised at peace
He hides And whoever sees
The cloud on the sky-line, the end of grief,
Dust in the distance that spells a relief,
Has found Shall have his share
Who naked emerges on the far side of despair

This one shall hear, though from afar,
The clear first call of new life, through fear
Piercing and padded walls
Shall arise, shall scatter his heirlooms, shall run till he falls

That one is slower, shall know by growing,
Not aware of his hour, but suddenly blowing
With leaves and roses, living from springs of the blood
These ones have found their good
Facing the rifles in a blind alley
Or stepping through ruins to sound reveille
They feel the father here,
They have him at heart, they shake hands, they know he is
near

23

Fourth Enemy speaks

I'm a dreamer, so are you
See the pink sierras call,
The ever-ever land of dew,
Magic basements, fairy coal
There the youngest son wins through,
Wee Willie can thrash the bully,
Living's cheap and dreams come true,
Lying manna tempts the belly,
Crowns are many, claims are few

Come along then, come away
From the rush hour, from the town
Blair and overcast to-day
Would put a blackcap out of tune,
Spoil the peacock's June display
Rigid time of driving-belts
Gives no rest for grace-notes gay
Fear and fever, cables, bolts
Pin the soul, allow no play

You're a poet, so am I
No man's keeper, intimate
Of breeding earth and brooding sky,
Irresponsible, remote,
A cool cloud, creation's eye
Seek not to turn the winter tide
But to temperate deserts fly
Close chain-mail of solitude
Must protect you or you die

Come away then, let us go,
Lose identity and pass
Through the still blockade of snow,
Fear's frontier, an age of ice
Pierce the crust and pass below
Towards a red volcanic core,
The warm womb where flesh can grow
Again and passion sleep secure
In creative ebb and flow

24

Tempt me no more, for I
Have known the lightning's hour,
The poet's inward pride,
The certainty of power

Bayonets are closing round
I shrink, yet I must wring
A living from despair
And out of steel a song

Though song, though breath be short,
I'll share not the disgrace
Of those that ran away
Or never left the base

Comrades, my tongue can speak
No comfortable words,
Calls to a forlorn hope,
Gives work and not rewards

Oh keep the sickle sharp
And follow still the plough
Others may reap, though some
See not the winter through

Father, who endest all,
Pity our broken sleep,
For we lie down with tears
And waken but to weep.

And if our blood alone
Will melt this iron earth,
Take it It is well spent
Easing a saviour's birth

25

Consider these, for we have condemned them,
Leaders to no sure land, guides their bearings lost
Or in league with robbers have reversed the signposts,
Disrespectful to ancestors, irresponsible to heirs.

Born barren, a freak growth, root in rubble,
Fruitlessly blossoming, whose foliage suffocates,
Their sap is sluggish, they reject the sun.

The man with his tongue in his cheek, the woman
With her heart in the wrong place, unhandsome, unwhole-
some,

Have exposed the new-born to worse than weather,
Exiled the honest and sacked the seer
These drowned the farms to form a pleasure-lake,
In time of drought they drain the reservoir
Through private pipes for baths and sprinklers.

Getters not begetters, gainers not beginners,
Whiners, no winners, no triers, betrayers,
Who steer by no star, whose moon means nothing
Daily denying, unable to dig
At bay in villas from blood relations,
Counters of spoons and content with cushions
They pray for peace, they hand down disaster

They that take the bribe shall perish by the bribe,
Dying of dry rot, ending in asylums,
A curse to children, a charge on the state
But still their fears and frenzies infect us,
Drug nor isolation will cure this cancer
It is now or never, the hour of the knife,
The break with the past, the major operation

PART FOUR

He comes with work to do, he does not come to coo

GERARD ANLEY HOPKINS

JUNCTION or terminus—here we alight
A myriad tracks converge on this moment,
This man where all ages and men are married,
Who shall right him? Who shall determine?

Standing astonished at the close of day
We know the worst, we may guess at good
Geared too high our power was wasted,
Who have lost the old way to the happy ending

A world behind us the west is in flames,
Devastated areas, works at a standstill,
No seed awakes, wary is no hunter,
The tame are ruined and the wild have fled

Where then the saviour, the stop of illness?
Hidden the mountain was to steel our hearts
Is healing here? An untrodden territory
Promises no coolness, invites but the brave

But see! Not far, not fiction, a real one,
Vibrates like heat-haze full in the sun's face
Filling the heart, that chaste and fleet one,
Rarely my kestrel, my lucky star

O man perplexed, here is your answer
Alone who soars, who feeds upon earth—
Him shall you heed and learn where joy is
The dance of action, the expert eye

Now is your moment, O hang-fire heart,
The ice is breaking, the death-grip relaxes,
Luck's turned. Submit to your star and take
Command, Oh start the attacking movement!

27

Wystan, Rex, all of you that have not fled,
This is our world, this is where we have grown
Together in flesh and live, though each alone
Shall join the enclosed order of the dead,
Enter the silent brotherhood of bone

All you that have a cool head and safe hands
Awaken early, there is much to do,
Hedges to raze, channels to clear, a true
Reckoning to find The other side commands
Eternity We have an hour or two

Let us speak first against that ancient firm
Who sell an armament to any cause,
Fear and Pain brothers call them bullies and curs
Who take us into corners and make us squirm,
Finding the weak spot, fumbling at secret doors

Let us tell them plainly now they haven't a chance,
We are going about together, we've mingled blood,
Taken a tonic that's set us up for good,
Their disguises are tabled, their movements known in advance,
We have found out who hides them and gives them food

Lipcurl, Swiveleye, Bluster, Crock and Queer,
Mister I'll-think-it-over, Miss Not-to-day,
Young Who-the-hell-cares and old Let-us-pray,
Sir Après-moi-le-déluge It is here
They get their orders These will have to pay.

Hear, the ice-wall of winter at our back,
Spring's first explosions throbbing across the plain,
Earth's diastole, flood-tide of heart and vein
Collect your forces for a counter-attack,
New life is on the way, the relief train

2

Though winter's barricade delays,
Another season's in the air,
We'll sow the spring in our young days,
Found a Virginia everywhere.

Look where the ranks of crocuses
Their rebel colours will display
Coming with quick fire to redress
The balance of a wintry day

Those daffodils that from the mould
Drawing a sweet breath soon shall flower,
With a year's labour get their gold
To spend it on a sunny hour.

They from earth's centre take their time
And from the sun what love they need
The proud flower burns away its prime,
Eternity lies in the seed.

Follow the kestrel, south or north,
Strict eye, spontaneous wing can tell
A secret Where he comes to earth
Is the heart's treasure Mark it well

Here he hovers You're on the scent,
Magnetic mountain is not far,
Across no gulf or continent,
Not where you think but where you are

Stake out your claim Go downwards Bore
Through the tough crust Oh learn to feel
A way in darkness to good ore
You are the magnet and the steel

Out of that dark a new world flowers
There in the womb, in the rich veins
Are tools, dynamos, bridges, towers,
Your tractors and your travelling-cranes

29

But winter still rides rough-shod upon us,
Summer comes not for wishing nor warmth at will
Passes are blocked and glaciers pen us
Round the hearth huddled, hoping for a break,
Playing at patience, reporting ill
Aware of changed temperature one shall wake
And rushing to window arouse companions
To feel frost surrender, an ice age finished,
Whose strength shall melt from the mountains and run
Riot, careering down corries and canyons
What floods will rise then through rivers replenished,
Embankments broken, and bluffs undone,
Laid low old follies, all landmarks vanished
Is it ready for launching, the Argo, the Ark,
Our transport, our buoyant one, our heart of oak?

Make haste, put through the emergency order
For an overtime day, for double shifts working
Weather is breaking, to-morrow we must board her,
Cast off onto chaos and shape a course
Many months have gone to her making,
Wood well-seasoned for watertight doors,
The old world's best in her ribs and ballast,
White-heat, high pressure, the heart of a new
In boiler, in gadget, in gauge, in screw
Peerless on water, Oh proud our palace,
A home for heroes, the latest of her line,
A beater to windward, obedient to rudder,
A steamer into storm, a hurricane-rider,
Foam-stepper, star-steerer, freighter and fighter—
Name her, release her, anoint her with wine!

Whom shall we take with us? The true, the tested,
Floods over to find a new world and man it,
Sure-foot, Surveyor, Spark and Strong,
Those whom winter has wasted, not worsted,
Good at their jobs for a break-down gang
Born haters will blast through debris or granite,
Willing work on the permanent ways,
And natural lovers repair the race
As needle to north, as wheel in wheel turning,
Men shall know their masters and women their need,
Mating and submitting, not dividing and defying,
Force shall fertilise, mass shall breed
Broad let our valleys embrace the morning
And satisfied see a good day dying,
Accepting the shadows, sure of seed

30

You who would come with us,
Think what you stand to lose—
An assured income, the will
In your favour and the feel
Of firmness underfoot
For travellers by this boat
Nothing to rest the eyes on
But a migrant's horizon,
No fixtures or bric-à-brac—
Wave walls without a break
Old acquaintance on the quay
Have come to clutch your knee—
Merry-Andrew and Cassandra,
Squeamish, Sponge and Squanderer,
The Insurance Agent, the Vicar,
Hard Cheese the Confidence-Tricker,
Private Loot, General Pride,
And Lust the sultry-eyed
Others you hate to leave
Wave with autumnal grief,
The best of what has been,
Props of an English scene,
A day we may not recover,
A camp you must quit for ever

Now, if you will, retract
For we are off to act
Activity of young
And cut the ravelled string

Calm yourselves, you that seek
The flame, and whose flesh is weak
Must keep it in cold storage
For we shall not encourage
The would-be hero, the nervous
Martyr to rule or serve us
Stand forward for volunteers
Who have tempered their loves and fears
In the skilled process of time,
Whose spirit is blown to a flame
That leaves no mean alloys
You who have heard a voice—
The siren in the morning
That gives the worker warning,
The whisper from the loam
Promising life to come,
Manifesto of peace
Read in an altered face—
Who have heard, and believe it true
That new life must break through

3 I

In happier times
When the heart is whole and the exile king returned
We may sing shock of opposing teams
And electric storms of love again

Our voices may be tuned
To solo flight, to record-breaking plane,
Looking down from hill
We may follow with fresh felicities

Wilful the light, the wayward motion of trees,
In happier times when the heart is whole

In happier times
When the land is ours, these springs shall irrigate
Good growing soil until it teems,
Redeemed from mortgage, drilled to obey,
But still must flow in spate
We'll focus stars again, though now must be
Map and binoculars
Outlining vision, bringing close
Natural features that will need no glass
In happier times, when the land is ours

Make us a wind
To shake the world out of this sleepy sickness
Where flesh has dwindled and brightness waned!
New life multiple in seed and cell
Mounts up to brace our slackness
Oppression's passion, a full organ swell
Through our throats welling wild
Of angers in unison arise
And hunger haunted with a million sighs,
Make us a wind to shake the world!

Make us the wind
From a new world that springs and gathers force,
Clearing the air, cleaning the wound,
Sets masses in motion and whips the blood
Oh they shall find him fierce
Who cling to relics, dead wood shall feel his blade.
Rudely the last leaves whirled,

A storm on fire, dry ghosts, shall go in
Fear and be laid in the red of their own ruin
Make us the wind from a new world!

32

You that love England, who have an ear for her music,
The slow movement of clouds in benediction,
Clear arias of light thrilling over her uplands,
Over the chords of summer sustained peacefully,
Ceaseless the leaves' counterpoint in a west wind lively,
Blossom and river rippling loveliest allegro,
And the storms of wood strings brass at year's finale
Listen Can you not hear the entrance of a new theme?

You who go out alone, on tandem or on pillion,
Down arterial roads riding in April,
Or sad beside lakes where hill-slopes are reflected
Making fires of leaves, your high hopes fallen
Cyclists and hikers in company, day excursionists,
Refugees from cursed towns and devastated areas,
Know you seek a new world, a saviour to establish
Long-lost kinship and restore the blood's fulfilment

You who like peace, good sticks, happy in a small way
Watching birds or playing cricket with schoolboys,
Who pay for drinks all round, whom disaster chose not,
Yet passing derelict mills and barns roof-rent
Where despair has burnt itself out—hearts at a standstill,
Who suffer loss, aware of lowered vitality,
We can tell you a secret, offer a tonic, only
Submit to the visiting angel, the strange new healer.

You above all who have come to the far end, victims
Of a run-down machine, who can bear it no longer,
Whether in easy chairs chafing at impotence
Or against hunger, bullies and spies preserving
The nerve for action, the spark of indignation—
Need fight in the dark no more, you know your enemies
You shall be leaders when zero hour is signalled,
Wielders of power and welders of a new world
.

33

Come for a walk in our pleasant land
We must wake up early if we want to understand
The length and breadth and depth of decay
Has corrupted our vowels and clogged our bowels,
Impaired our breathing, eaten pride away
What do they believe in—these yellow yes-men,
Pansies, politicians, prelates and pressmen,
Boneless wonders, unburstable bouncers,
Back-slappers, cheer-leaders, bribed announcers
Broadcasting All-Clear as the raiders draw near,
Would mend a burst dam with sticking-plaster
And hide with shocked hand the yawn of disaster—
What do they believe in? A god of gold,
A gilt-edged proposition, but it seems they've been sold
All you fine ladies, once you were flowers
England was proud of, rich blooms, good growers,
But overblown now, and we can't afford you
Your missions and fashions, your synthetic passions,
We don't want to bed you and we'd rather not board you
Weedy, greedy, unsatisfied, unsexed,
You're not living in this world, and as for the next—

You could hand white feathers on the judgment day
And give the damned a charity matinée
Our holy intellectuals—what are they at?
Filling in hard times with literary chat,
Laying down the law where no one listens,
Finding the flaw in long-scrapped systems
And short cuts to places no more on the map
Though off their feed now and inclined to mope
Nasties, nudists, bedlamites, buddhists,
Too feeble to follow, unable to guide,
It's time we asked them to step aside.
Children of the sahib, the flag and the mater,
Grim on golf-courses and haggard on horses
They try to live but they've ceased to matter
Who'll give a penny to the poor old guy?
These were the best that money could buy
And it isn't good enough For what can they fight?—
The silver spoon, the touched hat, the expensive seat
Marching at the orders of a mad physician
Down private roads to common perdition
Where is the bourgeois, the backbone of our race?
Bent double with lackeying, the joints out of place,
Behind bluffs and lucky charms hiding to evade
An overdue audit, anæmic, afraid
Trimmers and schemers, pusillanimous dreamers,
At cinemas, shop-windows and arenas we've found them
Bearing witness to a life beyond them
They're paying for death on the instalment plan
Who hoped to go higher and failed to be men
We'd like to fight but we fear defeat,
We'd like to work but we're feeling too weak,
We'd like to be sick but we'd get the sack,

We'd like to behave, we'd like to believe,
We'd like to love, but we've lost the knack

34

(FOR FRANCES WARNER)

What do we ask for, then?
Not for pity's pence nor pursy affluence,
Only to set up house again
Neither a coward's heaven, cessation of pain,
Nor a new world of sense,
But that we may be given the chance to be men
For what, then, do we hope?
Not longer sight at once but enlarged scope,
Miraculous no seed or growth of soul, but soil
Cleared of weed, prepared for good
We shall expect no birth-hour without blood
Nor fire without recoil.

Publish the vision, broadcast and screen it,
Of a world where the will of all shall be raised to highest
power,
Village or factory shall form the unit
Control shall be from the centres, quick brain, warm heart,
And the bearings bathed in a pure
Fluid of sympathy There possessions no more shall be part
Of the man, where riches and sacrifice
Are of flesh and blood, sex, muscles, limbs and eyes
Each shall give of his best It shall seem proper
For all to share what all produced
Men shall be glad of company, love shall be more than a
guest
And the bond no more of paper

Open your eyes, for vision
Is here of a world that has ceased to be bought and sold
With traitor silver and fairy gold,
But the diamond of endurance, the wrought-iron of passion
Is all their currency
As the body that knows through action they are splendid,
Feeling head and heart agree,
Young men proud of their output, women no longer stale
With deferred crisis, the old, a full day ended,
Able to stand down and sit still
Only the exploiter, the public nuisance, the quitter
Receive no quarter.

Here they do not need
To flee the birthplace There's room for growing and work-
ing
Bright of eye, champions for speed,
They sing their own songs, they are active, they play not
watch
Happy at night talking
Of the demon bowler cracked over the elm-trees,
The reverse pass that won the match
At festivals knowing themselves normal and well-born
They remember the ancestors that gave them ease,
Harris who fought the bully at Melbourne,
What Wainwright wrote with his blood, Rosa in prison—
All who sucked out the poison

35

In these our winter days
Death's iron tongue is glib

Numbing with fear all flesh upon
A fiery-hearted globe

An age once green is buried,
Numbered the hours of light,
Blood-red across the snow our sun
Still trails his faint retreat

• Spring through death's iron guard
Her million blades shall thrust,
Love that was sleeping, not extinct,
Throw off the nightmare crust

Eyes, though not ours, shall see
Sky-high a signal flame,
The sun returned to power above
A world, but not the same

36

Now raise your voices for a final chorus,
Lift the glasses, drink to-morrow's health—
Success to the doctor who is going to cure us
And those who will die no more in bearing wealth
On our magnetic mountain a beacon burning
Shall sign the peace we hoped for, soon or late,
Clear over a clean earth, and all men turning
Like infants' eyes like sunflowers to the light

Drink to the ordered nerves, the sight restored,
A day when power for all shall radiate
From the sovereign centres, and the blood is stirred
To flow in its ancient courses of love and hate

When the country vision is ours that like a barn
Fills the heart with slow-matured delight,
Absorbing wind and summer, till we turn
Like infants' eyes like sunflowers to the light.

For us to dream the birthday, but they shall act it—
Bells over fields, the hooters from the mine,
On New Year's Eve under the bridegroom's attic
Chorus of coastguards singing Auld Lang Syne
Now at hope's horizon that day is dawning,
We guess at glory from a mountain height,
But then in valley towns they will be turning
Like infants' eyes like sunflowers to the light

Beckon O beacon, and O sun be soon!
Hollo, bells, over a melting earth!
Let man be many and his sons all sane,
Fearless with fellows, handsome by the hearth
Break from your trance start dancing now in town,
And, fences down, the ploughing match with mate
This is your day so turn, my comrades, turn
Like infants' eyes like sunflowers to the light